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1 April 1955

MEMORANDUM FOR: The Director of Central Intelligence

SUBJECT: Meeting with Nelson Rockefeller et al
on Public Opinion Report

REFERENCE: Memorandum dated 31 March from [REDACTED] to DD/P; same subject

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1. The luncheon meeting in Mr. Rockefeller's office was attended by Messrs. Streibert and Loomis of USIA, Messrs. Hadley Cantril and Lloyd Free of the Research Council, Inc., Mr. Rockefeller, [REDACTED] and the undersigned. Mr. Rockefeller stated at the outset that the purpose of the meeting was to give him a chance to inform himself concerning existing programs and activities on foreign public opinion, as well as to arrive at certain conclusions as to how this job might better be done. He called attention to the President's strong expression of interest in the field and explained that the President was holding him accountable for providing this kind of briefing as distinguished from the intelligence briefings rendered by the Director to the NSC.

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2. Messrs. Streibert and Loomis then proceeded to give a very full description of the work of their agency in developing public opinion information. Mr. Loomis gave a very clear and impressive account of the mechanism and methods devised by USIA during the past ten months. Copies of the "West European Public Opinion Barometer" were circulated and then explained by Mr. Loomis, who stated that his organization intended to build up from the present number of four Western European countries to a total of around twelve or fifteen.

3. I was called upon by Mr. Rockefeller to describe not only the CIA potential in the field but any and all other sources, present or potential, of this kind of information. The material attached to [REDACTED] memorandum of 31 March was very helpful in this connection, and I was able to make

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good use of a number of categories and lists. At the conclusion of my portion of the discussion I recommended strongly that USIA be allowed and encouraged to go ahead with its program and to reinforce its present capabilities in various ways, so as to be able to act as the main collator of public opinion information as well as the chief collector. I said that CIA could contribute in various ways but that our contribution would probably be sporadic and not sufficiently timely or detailed to satisfy Mr. Rockefeller's requirements. I mentioned the various organizational elements and products of this Agency which should be of use to USIA, including [REDACTED] and special analyses; some of the output of the Contacts Branch of OO and occasional NIE's. I emphasized the importance of the contributions which the State Department could make and underscored the fact that public opinion information is not a covert activity.

4. Messrs. Cantril and Free commended the program of USIA and joined me in urging that USIA be strongly supported as the "executive agent" within Government for the collection of public opinion information. They made a number of specific operational suggestions to Mr. Loomis including the technique of "small sampling", and offered to assist Mr. Loomis in the recruitment of key personnel.

5. At the conclusion of the meeting Mr. Rockefeller expressed great satisfaction with the results and seemed well disposed toward the recommendation that USIA should be the agency principally concerned with this effort -- State, CIA and any others having capabilities in the field to play a supporting role.

FRANK G. WISNER
Deputy Director (Plans)

1cc: DD/I
1cc: SA/DCI/P
1cc: SA/DCI